

# Framingham– Dennison Block Redevelopment



**Site Details:** 4 Building Components- Dennison Triangle: 84 rental condos (4 Bishop St.), Tetra Tech Engineering Building (1 Grant St.), On hold- Residential (300 Howard St.), Office (39 Grant St.)  
**Zoning:** Office and R&D, Special permits

**Funding:** Private developer  
**Date(s):** 2002-present  
**Goals:** Downtown revitalization, industrial site reuse



Current site of the Framingham Dennison Block Development, 2011.

Corporation. In 1990, after its merger and relocation to California the industrial triangle complex has sat vacant and slowly developed into an eyesore.

## Site Development

The Town of Framingham’s plans for the Dennison block’s redevelopment has been in the works for several years. Before seeking developers to take on this project, town officials had a basic idea of redeveloping the site for a mixed use development including both residential and office space. They saw the development as a first step in the revitalization of their downtown. In 2002, the town planners changed the mixed use-zoning bylaw in the downtown district to include the Dennison site. It was around this same time that Rosewood developers came forth with a plan for the site redevelopment, which became an estimated \$60 million dollar project. The site of the industrial complex included four industrial brick buildings that resided on three different streets. Their plans included a residential component for the buildings on Bishop and Howard Streets, two-office building for the sites on Grant Street, a parking lot to accommodate parking for these facilities, and a revitalization of the park across the street. Town officials and the community worked closely with developers to redevelop this site, and there was little contention between the town and the developers in the redevelopment of this underutilized site.

## Development Process

The original zoning on the site was for Office and R&D; however with the Town’s approval, the zoning expanded the central business district to include the site, allowing it to be a candidate for mixed use redevelopment. Special permits were needed for the residential units, and each of the developments needed to apply on a project-to-project basis to be approved in the permitting process. Of the four developments in the original plan, only two were fully developed because of the soft real estate market in the mid-2000s.

## Background

At the turn of the 20th century, the Town of Framingham was a growing complex urban and industrial center with a downtown that was home to a number of manufacturers. One of the most famous was the Dennison Manufacturing plant that started out in 1840 jewelry and watch box manufacturer. This factory later turned into a robust and successful paper tags and shipping product company, now known as the famous global manufacturer of office supplies, Avery Dennison



The Residences at Dennison Triangle, 2011.



View of the Dennison Block with Dennison Triangle and Tetra Tech (left), vacant 39 Grant Street (straight), and parking lot (right), 2011.

Only two of the buildings were renovated and leased out, Dennison Triangle a residential building at 4 Bishop Street, and an office space on Grant Street, which was leased to an engineering firm called Tetra Tech. The residential building on Bishop Street were slotted to have 82 owner occupied housing units and buyers had begun placing deposits on the on their units starting around 2005. However, because of financial difficulties the developers had to file for Chapter 11: bankruptcy protection and each of the buildings was sold to different companies.

In the Dennison Triangle, 72 of the 84 housing units were sold to Dennison Bishop LLC for \$10 million. These developers changed the plans slightly by converting all the housing units to rental condominiums, and they did not include any affordable units.

This was an extremely frustrating process for buyers who had invested time and money into this opportunity, and many, after getting their money back, decided to pull out of their commitment. To date, several large commercial tenants, such as Tetra Tech and South Middlesex Opportunity Council nonprofit (original tenant of the Grant Street building slated for residential development), still remain alongside the Residences at Dennison Triangle. However the plans for the rest of the Dennison block have yet to be completed and plans have stalled for the development of the other residential and office complexes.

## Dennison Block Redevelopment and MetroFuture Goals

### Community Vitality

The goal of this touchstone development was to enhance and support the downtown district with an adaptive reuse of an existing industrial complex. Although there still needs to be work down to connect it with the downtown district, the completed structures have helped to restore vitality to this part of the neighborhood.

### Transportation Choices

The Dennison Block Redevelopment is about a mile away from the Framingham Commuter Rail Station. It is also in close proximity to a number of highways routes such as Routes 9, 135, 128 Interstate 90 (Mass Pike).

### Contact Information

For more information about the Dennison Block Redevelopment, contact Planning Director, Jay Grande at [JWG@framinghamma.gov](mailto:JWG@framinghamma.gov).



The 5 story shared parking lot for the adjacent developments.

*“The soft real estate market has had negative impacts on the completion of the Dennison Block Redevelopment projects. However what has been renovated and completed so far has helped to revitalize this area and have been successful in creating opportunities for mixed use in the downtown district.”*

-Jay Grande, Planning Director, Framingham